

Top Secret 219

(Security Classification)

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NATIONAL INTELLIGENCE DAILY CABLE

Monday 8 May 1978

CG NIDC 78/107C

NATIONAL SECURITY INFORMATION

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State Dept. review completed

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National Intelligence Daily Cable for Monday, 8 May 1978.

25X1 [redacted] 25X1
[redacted] The NID Cable is for the purpose of informing
senior US officials.

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AFGHANISTAN: Talks With New Leaders

25X1 [] //The US Ambassador to Afghanistan had separate conversations with Prime Minister Taraki and Foreign Minister Amin over the weekend and described his first discussions with the new Afghan leaders as friendly.//

25X1 [] //Both officials stressed that the new government wants to remain independent and nonaligned. They also recalled, with apparent fondness, their own past experiences in the US--Taraki worked at the Afghan Embassy in Washington in the early 1950s, and Amin holds a master's degree from Columbia University.//

25X1 [] //Taraki made it clear that bilateral relations will depend on US willingness to provide economic assistance to his government. He said he would be asking for new aid from both the US and the USSR.//

25X1 [] //The Prime Minister emphasized his government's commitment to raising the living standards of the Afghan people. When the Ambassador raised the subject of human rights, Taraki termed the issue very complicated and said that each nation must judge for itself the kind of human rights most suited to its situation and culture.//

25X1 [] Commenting on regional stability and specifically on relations with Pakistan and Iran, the Foreign Minister said his backward nation cannot afford anything other than peace and stability in the area. He warned, however, against any hostile activities by Pakistan or Iran aimed at the new regime in Afghanistan--noting that this could move his government to abandon a strictly nonaligned policy.

25X1 [] The Foreign Minister recommended that both official and private American activities in Afghanistan continue as usual, at least until he has had a chance to review them. This advice is in line with the government's encouragement of domestic businessmen to continue business as usual.

25X1 [] The one noteworthy nationalization since the coup has been of the Intercontinental Hotel in Kabul. There is no

American equity in the hotel, but a US firm that has the management contract for the establishment has some \$500,000 tied up in inventories and equipment in the building. [REDACTED]

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EGYPT: Limited Cabinet Reshuffle

[REDACTED] //Egyptian Prime Minister Salim yesterday announced a limited cabinet reshuffle that is unlikely to satisfy the government's numerous critics. Two deputy prime ministers were dropped but other key figures--including the Ministers of Foreign Affairs, War and Interior--remained unchanged. Most of the changes involved posts concerned with economics.//

[REDACTED] //The most significant change was the removal of Deputy Prime Minister Qaysuni, whose desire to resign--both because of ill health and because Salim failed to support his policies--had long been an open secret in Cairo. Qaysuni had played a critical role in building the confidence of Egypt's creditors in the government's economic reforms and in forging links to foreign donors. It was thought that President Sadat might keep him on until the completion of upcoming meetings with foreign aid donors. Qaysuni's departure will leave a major gap in the area of economic decisionmaking.//

[REDACTED] //The cabinet changes will do little to dampen increasingly vocal public complaints about corruption among ministers. Two ministers who are frequently criticized on such grounds--Minister of Tourism Stinu and Minister of Information Sawi--retained their posts. Many critics also believe Salim's removal is necessary. [REDACTED]

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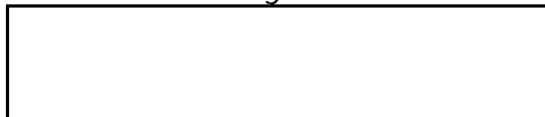
OPEC: Oil Ministers' Meeting

The OPEC oil ministers, in a two-day meeting in Taif, Saudi Arabia, that ended yesterday, agreed to set up a committee to study long-term policies and to keep the US dollar as the pricing unit for crude oil.

The policy study committee, according to press reports, will include the oil ministers of Saudi Arabia, Algeria, Iran, Iraq, Kuwait, and Venezuela. It will take up a variety of issues, including pricing and global oil supply and demand conditions.

Many of the ministers at the informal conference were satisfied that the US dollar had strengthened and believed the dollar would move up further before next month's formal OPEC ministerial meeting in Geneva. Iraq disagreed with the majority and argued that the recent pickup in the dollar's value was temporary.

Despite calls by Iraq and Libya for an oil price increase, the conferees reached no agreement on prices. Saudi Oil Minister Yamani stated that prices should remain frozen for the remainder of the year, but he expects some members to call again for an increase at next month's meeting.



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BRIEFS

Lebanon

25X1 [] Heavy fighting between Lebanese Christian militiamen and Syrian troops of the Arab peacekeeping force broke out in the Beirut area on Saturday. The situation is now quiet, but both sides are reported to be reinforcing their positions in anticipation of further clashes.

25X1 [] The fighting apparently erupted when the Syrians attempted to change guards at a checkpoint near a Christian neighborhood. Although reports of which side started the fighting conflict, Christian forces--led by members of the extremist Tanzim group--engaged the Syrians with mortars and machine guns and received tank and artillery fire in return. At least two people were killed.

Tanzania

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[] Tanzanian President Nyerere announced last week that he plans to release Andreas Shipanga, the former Minister of Information for the South-West Africa People's Organization, and 10 of his supporters who have been detained in Tanzania since 1976. Nyerere indicated the SWAPO dissidents would be released by the end of this week and flown out of the country, possibly to the UK.

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[] Nyerere may have intended the announcement--made before South Africa attacked SWAPO bases in Angola--as a signal to SWAPO leader Sam Nujoma to be more forthcoming in the talks with the Western five-power contact group on an independence program for Namibia. Nyerere had planned to release the 11 men earlier this year, but reconsidered after SWAPO protested. It is uncertain whether the South African incursion has led Nyerere to change plans again.

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[] Before his detention, Shipanga had challenged Nujoma's leadership by calling for a new election in SWAPO. Nujoma has justified the detention by claiming that Shipanga and his supporters are traitors and that they led South African troops to a SWAPO camp in Zambia in July 1976 as part of their "rebellion" against the SWAPO leadership. []

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